

07/27/2013

Air Travel Exposures

Contact investigations on aircraft passengers are routinely conducted by CDC and OPH for diseases such as measles, tuberculosis, pertussis, meningococcal disease, SARS, MERS-CoV, novel Influenza strains with pandemic potential and other infections with droplet or airborne transmission.

When a confirmed case of a communicable disease is identified in a traveler who was potentially contagious during air travel, CDC obtains information for exposed passengers from the airline and federal partners. CDC sends information to states via Epi-X using the *DGMQ Traveler Notification Contact* distribution list, and includes information about flight exposure, and identifying and contact information for travelers in their jurisdiction.

Strategy

- CDC notifies exposed travelers and seek to identify symptomatic contacts.
- CDC provides a specific definition for who is a symptomatic contact; for example: Those who have fever plus lower respiratory tract symptoms with onset one to 14 days after their flight,
- CDC makes recommendation for the proper public health and medical management, including isolation measures and early diagnostic testing.
- Symptomatic contacts are referred to OPH for coordination of medical evaluation.
- Asymptomatic contacts are advised to self-monitor for symptoms for a specific period (n days) following the flight and contact the health department if symptoms develop, and be re-interviewed at the end of the incubation period.

Initial wide cast net: If a high-fatality rate is reported and if the efficiency of person-to-person transmission of the infection is not well characterized, a conservative approach is taken for the first U.S. cases. In this case, many more people on the flight are considered as contacts, more than usual, possibly including all passengers and crew onboard for longer flights. Once transmission is better understood the approach may be curtailed.

As these investigations may be time consuming, OPH should conserve resources to investigate the index case-patient, his or her traveler companions, and other household or community contacts; manage any symptomatic contacts; and respond to other issues in their communities, including risk communications.

Information for passengers: Example of MERS

Information for Ill Travelers: Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS)

Read this card to find out what you need to do!

You have been given this card because you have fever with cough or difficulty breathing.

On your trip, you visited a country where some cases of MERS were reported. MERS is a respiratory illness caused by a new virus. MERS is not very common. Some people who have had MERS have been sick enough to be in a hospital.

If your symptoms get worse or you are worried about your illness

1. Call your doctor.
2. Tell the doctor about your symptoms and recent travel.
 - o If you don't have a doctor, call an urgent care clinic or local emergency room.
 - o Or you can call the local health department for advice. Contact information is at www.naccho.org/about/lhd.

If you go to a doctor

1. Wear a face mask to the doctor's office or ask for one as soon as you arrive.
2. Take this card and show it to a staff member when you check in.
3. Tell the doctor about your symptoms and recent travel.

Protect others from infection

- When you cough or sneeze, cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or wear a face mask. Throw used tissues in a trash can.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water—especially after you cough or sneeze. If not available, use an alcohol-based hand gel.
- Stay home from work or school until you feel better or until a doctor says it is OK to go back.

For more information See www.cdc.gov/travel

See "A Note to the Doctor" on the other side →

MERS Information-June 2013



A Note to the Doctor

The patient giving you this card recently traveled to an area affected by Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV), formerly referred to as novel coronavirus) and has fever and respiratory symptoms.

1. Please evaluate this patient using the case definitions provided at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/mers/case-def.html.
2. If this patient has an illness consistent with the MERS case definition:
 - Call your local or state public health department to discuss testing for MERS-CoV using rRT-PCR (real-time reverse-transcription PCR).
 - Implement infection control precautions as outlined in CDC guidance. (See link below.)
3. See www.naccho.org/about/lhd for your local health department contact information.
4. If you are unable to reach your local health department, call the CDC Emergency Operations Center for assistance: **(770) 488-7100**.

For more information

- **CDC MERS Website:**

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/mers/index.html

- **MERS Update, Case Definitions, and Guidance:**

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/mers/case-def.html